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SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER GAERC AND LITHUANIAN VIEWS ON GYMnich

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Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Rebecca Dunham for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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1. (C) We delivered reftel points September 13 to Tomas Gulbinas, head of MFA's Common Foreign Policy and Security Division who is responsible for briefing the FM for the GAERC. Gulbinas said that the Lithuanian FM does not plan any interventions in the September 15 GAERC, which focuses on issues where Lithuania lacks expertise and generally follows consensus. Gulbinas was present for the September 1-2 Gymnich, and gave us a brief readout of Lithuania's views of the EU-Russia discussion there. End Summary.

Lithuania's view on Gymnich Russia talk

2. (C) Gulbinas told us that EU Foreign Ministers expressed broad consensus during the September 1-2 Gymnich that state control of democratic institutions in Russia has expanded alarmingly. Nevertheless, opinion about future EU relations with Russia differed, he said. Lithuania's FM intervened on Russia, and mentioned the recent cessation of oil supply to Lithuania's refinery, Mazeikiu Nafta. Gulbinas also said that the GOL thought the Finnish Presidency's invitation to Russian President Putin to attend the informal October 22 EU summit in Lahti was "inexplicable and inappropriate," saying that the EU should extend extraordinary invitations (that is, outside of scheduled EU-Russia Summits) only to resolve crises. According to Gulbinas, there was some discussion among the ministers on a new EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation agreement to replace the current one that expires in 2007. Gulbinas told us that some states want to rush towards a new EU-Russia agreement while others, including Lithuania, want "to take time to assess changes both in Russia and in the EU."

Iran

3. (C) Based on the Gymnich, Gulbinas said that he did not expect any strong statement encouraging another UNSCR on Iran to come out of the September 18 GAERC, although he added that Lithuania is not really part of the equation on Iran discussions. He said that statements from the Finnish Presidency following the Gymnich were intended not to undermine Solana's subsequent meetings with Iranian officials.

Middle East Peace Process

4. (C) On MEPP, Gulbinas said that Lithuania plays almost no role in the formation of European consensus due to its lack of expertise and resources in the area, but he characterized the European view as: support for President Abbas, support

for formation of a National Unity Government, and revival of the roadmap overseen by the Quartet.

Lebanon and Syria

15. (C) Gulbinas said that, in his opinion, the comment at the Gymnich about the EU providing technical assistance on border controls to Syria was "empty," as no such project has been seriously proposed and Syria would object anyway. Overall, there have been noises in European structures to broaden engagement of Syria on issues related to MEPP, he said.

Ukraine

16. (C) The Lithuanian FM did not attend the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council September 14, although Ukraine-EU relations are an issue of great interest to Lithuania, because of the forum's troika format. Gulbinas, just returned from a tour of the Ukraine-Moldovan border regions, said that Lithuania agrees with our points on Ukraine and especially supports the call for rule-of-law and anti-corruption efforts. Lithuania has reiterated the point to Ukrainian officials that it is now up to Ukraine to send positive signals on WTO and NATO engagement, he said. According to Gulbinas, in recent meetings (not further specified) Yanukovych's government seemed more positive on meeting WTO accession commitments than it had been in initial meetings with the Lithuanians, but it remains ambiguous on NATO.
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